

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 27, 2005

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 14, 2005

SENATE BILL

No. 849

Introduced by Senator Escutia

(Coauthor: Senator Kuehl)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Chan, Koretz, *Levine*, and Pavley)

February 22, 2005

An act to add Section 104324.27 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to environmental health.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 849, as amended, Escutia. Environmental health data tracking.

Existing law establishes the Environmental Health Surveillance System through an interagency agreement between the State Department of Health Services, the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA), and the University of California if authorized by the regents, for the purpose of, among other things, tracking and evaluating a variety of chronic diseases in relation to environmental exposures.

This bill would require, pursuant to that interagency agreement, the establishment of the Interagency Office of Environmental Health Tracking within the department's Division of Environmental and Occupational Disease Control for the purpose of implementing the California Health Tracking Program. The bill would require the department and the Cal/EPA to each provide one 50% time research scientist as staff for the new office. The bill would state the Legislature's intent to provide funding to the department and the Cal/EPA for those research scientist positions in the 2005-06 Budget Act. The bill would prescribe the office's objectives over a 3-year period and would require the office to complete certain duties ~~for the~~

~~2005-06 fiscal year~~ during the first year after it is established. The bill would require any additional funding for the office, beyond funding that the Legislature may appropriate for the research scientists, to come from federal or private sources. *The bill would require that its provisions be implemented only if the department and the Cal/EPA receive funding in the 2005-06 Budget Act for the two 50% time research scientist positions, and if the Department of Finance makes a determination that sufficient federal or private moneys have been made available to the state to fully implement the bill.*

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) Chronic diseases and injuries account for 75 percent of all
- 4 deaths in California.
- 5 (b) The medical and income-loss costs of chronic diseases for
- 6 the state in 2000 were estimated to be \$107 billion.
- 7 (c) Researchers have strong scientific evidence showing that
- 8 many of these diseases, including, but not limited to, respiratory
- 9 illness, adverse pregnancy outcomes, cancer, and developmental
- 10 disabilities, are associated with environmental exposures.
- 11 (d) If preventable environmental hazards account for even 1
- 12 percent of the cost of all chronic diseases in California, action to
- 13 identify and reduce these environmental exposures would save
- 14 the state hundreds of millions of dollars per year.
- 15 (e) The State of California has an inadequate ongoing
- 16 surveillance system to describe trends in environmental hazards
- 17 or exposures and environmentally related diseases, and
- 18 inadequate resources to carry out special studies to explain the
- 19 trends or to explore the policy implications of its findings.
- 20 (f) Environmental surveillance systems are necessary to
- 21 monitor the frequency and geographic distribution of these
- 22 illnesses and exposures and to protect public health.
- 23 (g) Ongoing surveillance of environmentally related diseases
- 24 and priority environmental hazards should be the function and
- 25 responsibility of the State of California.

1 (h) There are multiple agencies in California that collect and
2 manage health and environmental data, and those databases,
3 which could be used for tracking, need to be updated and made
4 uniform. However, there is a lack of systematic analysis of the
5 data.

6 (i) There needs to be a coordinating body that brings these
7 agencies together and promotes collaboration and sets the
8 priorities for updating these databases and systems. The cost to
9 integrate, coordinate, and analyze the data is only a fraction of
10 the cost of collecting the data.

11 (j) An interagency office of environmental health tracking
12 should be established and staffed jointly by the State Department
13 of Health Services and the California Environmental Protection
14 Agency.

15 SEC. 2. Section 104324.27 is added to the Health and Safety
16 Code, immediately following Section 104324.25, to read:

17 104324.27. (a) Pursuant to the memorandum of
18 understanding set forth in Section 104324.25, the department and
19 the California Environmental Protection Agency shall establish
20 the Interagency Office of Environmental Health Tracking within
21 the department's Division of Environmental and Occupational
22 Disease Control for the purpose of implementing the California
23 Health Tracking Program.

24 (b) As used in this chapter "office of health tracking" means
25 the Interagency Office of Environmental Health Tracking
26 established in subdivision (a).

27 (c) The department and the California Environmental
28 Protection Agency shall both provide staff for the office of health
29 tracking with one 50 percent time research scientist in the
30 Environmental Health Investigations Branch of the department,
31 and one 50 percent time research scientist in the Office of
32 Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. The research
33 scientists shall, among other things, assist local communities by
34 providing technical assistance to obtain and interpret needed
35 environmental health data.

36 (d) The objectives of the office of health tracking shall be to
37 accomplish the following over a three-year period:

38 (1) Coordinate the multiple tracking data collection activities
39 across various state agencies and work to promote access to
40 priority databases in order to integrate data into the California

1 Environmental Health Tracking System that is currently being
2 developed with a planning grant from the federal Centers for
3 Disease Control and Prevention.

4 (2) Oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the
5 final report of the working group established pursuant to this
6 chapter.

7 (3) Facilitate the dissemination of surveillance data to the
8 public and researchers and provide technical assistance on how to
9 interpret the data.

10 (4) Develop data sharing agreements, and develop procedures
11 to protect individual privacy.

12 (5) Develop a strategic plan that would include a mission
13 statement, critical issues, core priorities for research and
14 surveillance, identification of internal and external stakeholders,
15 and a work plan describing future program development.

16 (6) Collate and analyze data, including, but not limited to, all
17 of the following:

18 (A) Identifying trends and geographic patterns of disease and
19 environmental hazards or exposures.

20 (B) Analyzing hazards, exposures, and diseases with relation
21 to socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity.

22 (C) Provide baseline data and present descriptive information
23 relevant to policy formation that are consistent with existing
24 goals of the program.

25 (7) Develop a strategic plan, in consultation with the Office of
26 Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, for obtaining missing
27 information on chemicals as necessary for analyzing significant
28 environmental exposures and potentially damaging health and
29 environmental effects, including reports from the National
30 Academy of Sciences and other relevant studies.

31 (8) Produce a report to the Legislature once every two years
32 on the status of surveillance activities and related research
33 programs.

34 (e) The office of health tracking shall use the program's
35 existing advisory bodies composed of members selected from
36 impacted communities, local government, environmental
37 advocacy groups, the regulated community, labor, and other
38 nongovernmental organizations to review and comment on its
39 findings, to provide input on future directions, to comment on the

1 biennial report, and to ensure accountability to communities and
2 the public.

3 (f) Any additional funding for the office of health tracking,
4 beyond funds that the Legislature may appropriate for the
5 research scientists required by subdivision (c), shall come from
6 federal or private sources. *The office of health tracking shall*
7 *establish a state infrastructure that would signal the commitment*
8 *of the state to environmental health surveillance to private and*
9 *federal funding sources and thus, would facilitate further funding*
10 *for the office. Federal sources that should be targeted for funding*
11 *include the National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences*
12 *and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).*
13 *Private sources for funding may include the California Wellness*
14 *Foundation, the California Endowment, the National*
15 *Environmental Education and Training Foundation, the Trust for*
16 *America's Health, and the Public Health Trust. The CDC-funded*
17 *California Environmental Health Tracking Program will be*
18 *submitting a competitive renewal for its program activities in*
19 *spring 2006. This mechanism would fund surveillance activities*
20 *over a five-year period. The half-time research scientists shall*
21 *work closely with the extramurally funded staff from the*
22 *CDC-funded tracking program to propose program activities*
23 *that could overlap with the goals and mission of the office of*
24 *health tracking.*

25 SEC. 3. ~~For the 2005-06 fiscal year~~ *During the first year after*
26 *it is established,* the office of health tracking shall do all of the
27 following:

28 (a) Develop and sign cooperative agreements for data sharing
29 between the office of health tracking, the Division of Chronic
30 Disease and Injury Control in the department, and the boards,
31 departments, and offices of the California Environmental
32 Protection Agency. These agreements shall be modeled after the
33 recent Memorandum of Understanding signed by the United
34 States Environmental Protection Agency and the United States
35 Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate
36 collection of health and environmental data.

37 (b) Develop a strategic plan that shall include (1) a mission
38 statement, (2) identification of both critical issues and core
39 priorities for research and surveillance and internal and external

1 stakeholders, and (3) a work plan describing future program
2 development.

3 (c) Develop extramural proposals to seek federal and
4 foundation funds to establish pilot tracking projects, fund
5 additional staff positions, and develop solid cost estimates and
6 proposals for a tracking function.

7 SEC. 4. It is the Legislature's intent to provide funding to the
8 State Department of Health Services and the California
9 Environmental Protection Agency for the research scientist
10 positions required by subdivision (c) of Section 104324.27, as
11 added by this act, in the 2005-06 Budget Act.

12 *SEC. 5. This act shall only be implemented if the State*
13 *Department of Health Services and the California Environmental*
14 *Protection Agency receive funding in the 2005-06 Budget Act for*
15 *the two 50-percent time research scientist positions required by*
16 *this act, and if the Department of Finance makes a determination*
17 *that sufficient federal or private moneys have been made*
18 *available to the state to fully implement this act.*